

Missouri Assessment Program Spring 2004

Communication Arts

Released Items

Grade 7

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The photograph below shows some students on a wildlife refuge adventure. The article beginning on Page 14 is about the students and about the place they visited.



Students visit the Okefenokee Swamp.

Go On ►

Directions

This article and the accompanying illustrations are about a school outing. Read the article. Then answer Numbers 10 through 15.

Swamp Safari

Folks who know the Okefenokee (oh-ku-fuh-NO-kee) call the custom “shining” gators: shine a flashlight into the pitch dark, and the night comes alive with glowing red “embers.” But the embers are eyes—*alligator* eyes reflecting the beam of the flashlight.

Being surrounded by alligators took some getting used to for eight explorers on a school trip to the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, located in southeast Georgia and northern Florida. Few of these explorers from St. Edward High School in Lakewood, Ohio, had even been in a canoe before this trip.

“I thought the swamp would be muddy and smelly. It wasn’t that way at all,” says Chris Manley, 17, of Strongsville, Ohio. During their three-day voyage with a teacher and a guide, the paddlers discovered the swamp was much like a zoo without cages. They passed dozens of dozing alligators and lots of anhingas, birds that swim with their necks out of water, making them look like snakes. Mike Zajac, 18, of North Olmsted, Ohio, even tangled with a foot-long fish that jumped into his canoe. “It was hard to catch it to throw it back,” he says, “because it was so slippery.”

Seen everywhere in the Okefenokee Swamp, American alligators can grow to 16 feet—as long as a pickup truck.

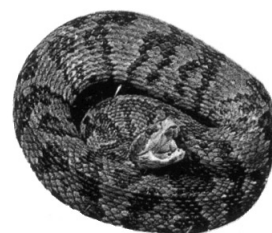
Swamp gas bubbles up from the black water. “It looks like Coca-Cola,” says Chris. Sometimes from the swamp bottom a “blowup,” a chunk of peat—a spongy mat of decayed plants—surfaces. Plants start growing on blowups, which soon look like land. Don’t be fooled, though; step on one and you’ll find it quaking and rolling under your feet. The name Okefenokee comes from a Native American word meaning “land of trembling earth.”

The paddlers covered a total of 22 miles along marked canoe trails through open swamp and forests of tall cypress trees. At night they camped in sleeping bags on raised platforms. “There’s no TV, no radio, no technology,” says Justin Sidhu, 17, of North Royalton, Ohio. “So we did a lot of talking and telling stories.” There’s also no noise, except for an occasional alligator snorting. “Nature has a power here,” says Mike. “This experience made everyone feel close.” Dodging alligators for three days can do that to you.



OKEFENOKEE SWAMP

The Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, a beautiful and isolated wilderness, forms the headwaters of the Suwannee River (see map at right). Established in 1937 as part of a large system of lands devoted to protecting wildlife, this refuge is home to 424 animal species and 621 plant species. The bobcat (below right), a predator the size of a standard poodle, is often seen here. Harder to find is the venomous Florida cottonmouth snake, also known as a water moccasin (right). Other species in the area include the gray fox, which climbs trees, and the big brown bat. Able to fly 40 miles an hour, it's the fastest known bat in the world. All this life thrives in a place about 650 square miles, or less than one-fifth the size of Yellowstone National Park.



Cottonmouth



Bobcat



Bird Bonanza. The pileated woodpecker is one of eight woodpecker species that live in the Okefenokee. More than 234 species of birds make the swamp their home.

Go On ►

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How does the author's use of quotations from the students in "Swamp Safari" make the article more interesting? Use details and/or examples from the article to support your explanation.

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Go On ►

Imagine your teacher has asked you to write a letter to your class in which you explain the main points of the article. Use details and/or examples from the article to support the ideas in your letter.

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Session 1 | Page 19

WRITING

Directions

Now you will write a paper in response to a writing prompt. First, read the prompt in the box below.

Then use the separate paper your teacher has given you for your prewriting activity (such as brainstorming, listing, freewriting, clustering, mapping, or drawing).

After you finish your prewriting activity, write your first draft on the separate paper your teacher has given you. Look back at your prewriting activity for ideas.

Writing Prompt

The passages you read involve individuals who have adventures. Write a paper to your classmates in which you describe a job that includes elements of adventure. Explain what makes this job adventurous.

Go On ►

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Directions

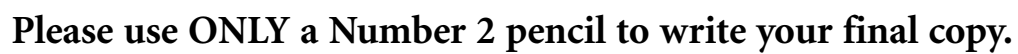
Now you have time to revise your draft. Reread your draft and think about the Writer's Checklist below. Check every box that makes a true statement about your draft.

Writer's Checklist



- ☐ My paper has a beginning, middle, and end.
- ☐ My paper uses paragraphing appropriately.
- ☐ My paper flows smoothly from one idea to another.
- ☐ My paper stays on the topic.
- ☐ My paper includes details and examples.
- ☐ My paper uses precise and vivid language.
- ☐ My paper includes a variety of sentence structures.
- ☐ My paper includes correct grammar/usage, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.

For every box you did not check, make the necessary revisions on your draft before you write your final copy on Pages 5 through 9.

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Session 2 | Page 5

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Please use ONLY a Number 2 pencil to write your final copy.

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Handwriting practice lines consisting of 20 horizontal lines.

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